

# NI Bulletin

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# Numismatics International Bulletin

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We begin the year with several articles of potential interest, commencing with a return to the countermarks of Levern Mill.

Coins were sometimes minted to commemorate important local events. Such is the case with our second item.

From here we travel to Ecuador to examine and catalogue some of its non-circulating coinage.

Prior to the invention of coinage as we know it, weights were used as units of exchange and with any such item of value, it was counterfeited. These form the basis of a guest article published with permission of the website: Haaretz.com.

We follow this with an item from our own site and conclude with the return of our book review section.

As usual, submissions welcome.

Joseph Uphoff  
Editor

## LEVERN MILL Merchant Countermarked Dollar.

### Another find.

Eric C. Hodge. NI#2784

In a previous article<sup>1</sup> the writer recorded details of a new example of the Levern Mill countermark, with definitive variances from previously known examples. The article concluded 'We can only await future coin finds, contemporary records or better informed opinion to answer these questions.' The questions were whether the find was a new variety and whether the order of issue of the types was 9a, 9b and 9c.<sup>2</sup>

Now, six years later, another example, with those same differences, has come to light.

The new find (Figs. 1 & 2) is on a Mexico City 1809 TH 8 reales host of Ferdinand VII and is countermarked LEVERN·MILL·S·D·&C° surrounding a 5, with three triangular nicks on the outer rim positioned one above the stop between N·M, and the others above the stop between S·D<sup>3</sup> and just before the ° of C°. It is worth noting here that the three triangular rim nicks are placed in such positions as to avoid contact with any of the countermark lettering.

There are no broken annulets on the reverse. This countermark is, therefore, a second example of type 9c and as the first was cancelled, is the only uncanceled one known to date.



Figs. 1 & 2. Type 9c. Coin 39mm diam. c/m 18.5mm diam.

Careful study of this new countermark (type 9c) clearly shows a mark above the right hand down stroke of the M (Fig. 3) as is seen in type 9b<sup>4</sup> (Fig. 6).



Fig. 3. Type 9c.



Fig. 4. Type 9c.

This mark was not noticed in the first cancelled example of type 9c and was not mentioned in the previous article. Confirmation has been received from the owner that that mark is present in his cancelled countermarked coin (Fig. 7) and he goes on to state:-

*'I have now examined my coin under a binocular microscope and can confirm that the mark above the right hand upright of the M is present. I am inclined to the view that it is a die break rather than a positive mark cut into the die, as in width, depth and definition it is similar to the two die breaks that radiate from the foot and mid-point of the curve of the 5 (of the new coin find) (Fig. 4). These two die breaks are also present on my coin (these having escaped the cancellation!), although the one from the outer border of the curve is incomplete, suggesting an earlier use of the die than when it was applied to the new coin.'*



Fig. 5. Type 9a

Fig. 6. Type 9b.<sup>5</sup>Fig. 7. Type 9c.<sup>6</sup>

Further comparison shows clearly that the die used for types 9b (Fig. 6) and 9c (Fig. 1) is the same (different from 9a, Fig. 5) and that the value and name are all one punch. This in turn tends to confirm the correct order of issue as 9b then 9c, because the 9b die would only need extra cutting work on the outer ring to make the three additional triangular nicks present in type 9c. Also the single 'small triangular nick'<sup>7</sup> present in all type 9b's above the right hand down stroke of the M is still present in both the 9c examples. It now appears that this mark is possibly a die break because, as mentioned above, on careful study it is not triangular but can be seen to be a fairly straight line joining the top of the M to the outer rim of the countermark (Figs. 3 & 6). In addition the die break from

the end of the tail of the 5, mentioned above, is also clearly seen in both types 9b and 9c (Figs. 4, 5 & 6). The second die break from under the middle of the tail of the 5 is only clearly visible in the new coin find (Fig. 4) indicating a later striking commensurate with the later date on the coin (1809).

### Summary.

Type 9c can now be viewed, with more confidence, as a new variety of the type in the progressive sequence of issues with improved privy marks.

The date of this new coin, 1809, also fits well with the estimated issue dates for all type 9's as 1802-1810 formulated in the original article<sup>8</sup> and gives an additional argument for placing 9c after 9b as 1809 is the latest dated host of all known type 9 examples.

1. *Spink Numismatic Circular, August 2006. Levern Mill-A New Countermark Variety or Different Die?* Eric C. Hodge, pp. 200-2. (Hodge 2006).

2. These types refer to Manville, Harrington E. *Tokens of the Industrial Revolution – Foreign Silver Coins Countermarked for Use in Great Britain c. 1787-1828*, pp. 19-24. British Numismatic Society Publication No. 3, Spink, London, 2001 (Manville 2001).

3. Believed to represent Stewart and Dunlop, owners of the mill.

4. Manville 2001, p. 23. Hodge 2006, p. 200.

5. © The Trustees of the British Museum ref. 1996-10-1-06.

6. © The Trustees of the British Museum ref. 1996-10-1-07.

7. So described in Manville 2001, p. 23.

8. Hodge 2006, p. 202.

## A COIN TO CELEBRATE WINNING A LEGAL CASE - THE 1676 TALER OF AUGUST OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN-PLÖN-NORBURG

Robert Ronus, NI LM # 139

The county (later Grand Duchy) of Oldenburg was in north-west Germany, not so far from Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark, with whom the counts had close ties. Indeed, the house of Oldenburg has provided a remarkable number of rulers in many countries: Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Russia, Greece, and is in the line of succession to the thrones of the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth realms after Queen Elizabeth II through Prince Philip, her husband.

The earliest traceable ancestor is Elimar (Egilmar, Hilmar), a count living in 1108. In 1247 one member of a younger branch, Otto, built the castle of Delmenhorst, and his successor Johann was probably the first to style himself Count of Oldenburg and Delmenhorst. His descendant Dietrich, ancestor of all later lines of Oldenburg married Hedwig, sister of the last rulers of Schleswig and Holstein of the house of Schauenburg. When he died in 1444, his sons were under age and were raised by their maternal uncle, the duke of Holstein, who arranged for the eldest Christian to be elected king of Denmark in 1448, and for the youngest, Gerhard to receive Oldenburg and Delmenhorst. The line of Christian split into two main branches: (1) the Danish line, whose senior royal line became extinct in 1863 and whose junior, ducal, or Sonderburg line split into many branches, one of which inherited Denmark in 1863, and (2) the Holstein-Gottorp line, whose senior branch became Tsars of Russia (under the name of Romanov) until 1917, and whose junior line split into the royal Swedish line (on the throne of Sweden from 1751 to 1818).

Gerhard, who received Oldenburg and Delmenhorst, also unsuccessfully disputed his rights in Schleswig and Holstein. Three centuries later his direct line would become extinct. Count Anton Günther's marriage was childless, although he had an illegitimate son named Anton von Aldenburg (note the name is Oldenburg modified by one letter), raised by the Emperor to the rank of Count in 1653. After attempts at making his illegitimate son his heir, he split his inheritance (under the Rendsburger Pact of April 16 1649) into three parts. Oldenburg, Delmenhorst and his main hereditary possessions went to the king of Denmark and the duke of Holstein-Gottorp. The lordship of Jever went to his nephew the prince of Anhalt-Zerbst. Some minor territories went to Anton von Aldenburg through a trust under which they would revert to the feudal successors of Anhalt-Zerbst on his death.

After Anton Günther's death in 1667 the partition was carried out. However, Joachim Ernest, Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Plön, sued in the Reichshofrat (Imperial Court Council), on the basis that he was closer to the original ancestor of the House of Oldenburg, and that an imperial diploma (Lehensexpektanzbrief) of April 1 1642 had designated as heir the closest *jure agnationis*. Succession suits dragged on in the courts at that time as they do today.

During the suit, Christian V, the king of Denmark bought from Joachim Ernst his claims to Oldenburg and Delmenhorst, including , should the duke succeed in the suit against the remaining defendant, Christian Albert of Holstein-Gottorp, the half of Oldenburg and Delmenhorst that he would thus secure, all for 300,000 Talers (March 18 1671). In a series of rulings the Reichshofrat ruled for the plaintiff (July 20 1673; Sept. 14 1674; and a final decision on Jan. 23 1676). In the meantime Joachim Ernst had died on October 5 1671. His heirs, his two older sons, Johann Adolf, the new duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Plön, and his younger brother August, who had inherited the district of Norburg, ceded Oldenburg and Delmenhorst, the territories they had just won in the courts, to Christian V, in accordance with the agreement on June 22, 1676.

August was an officer in the army of Brandenburg-Prussia. He was promoted to General of the Infantry on August 20 1664. At the same time, he was appointed governor of Magdeburg by Elector Friedrich Wilhelm. On December 21 1674, he was appointed governor of Minden as a reward for his bravery in the war against the Ottoman Empire. Holstein- Plön coinage was a matter for his brother Johann Adolf. However, it was for some reason August who had coins minted in Magdeburg to celebrate their legal victory and the conclusion of the Oldenburg succession dispute: a 4 Ducat and a 3 Ducat in gold and a silver Taler (of which there are two varieties with miniscule differences). Here is one of the Talers.



Obv.:AUGUST9. D.G. HAER. NORW (heir to Norway). DUX. S.H.S. & D. CO. IN. OLD. & DELM (duke of Schleswig-Holstein, of Stormarn and Ditmar, Count in Oldenburg and Delmenhorst) 3-helmeted 5-field arms of Norway (lion with axe), Schleswig (2 lions), Holstein (nettle), Ditmar (knight on horse) and Stormarn (swan), with centre escutcheon with qtrd. arms of Oldenburg (horizontal bars) & Delmenhorst (cross), dividing at bottom in curve 16 C (=Christoph Pflug,mm, Magdeburg, 1672-78) 76; below in legend .NORBURG.





Rev.:cross patonce DIVINA  
BENEDICTIONE ET  
CAESAREA IUSTITIA  
(with divine blessing and the  
justice of Caesar) Sun  
shining down on bird  
carrying scales of justice  
over city view, in circle  
44 mm 29.08 g.  
Dav.3722A. Lange 767b.  
KM 6.

I do not know how much of  
the king of Denmark's

300.000 Talers ended up in the hands of August but he clearly felt the court's decision was worth commemorating. Thus the king of Denmark secured full possession of both Oldenburg and Delmenhorst. They would remain Danish until 1773 when in another complicated agreement King Christian VII surrendered Oldenburg to Catherine the Great in exchange for her son and heir Paul's share in the condominial royal-ducal government of the Duchy of Holstein and his claims to the ducal share in the government of the Duchy of Schleswig. She bestowed Oldenburg on a relative, Friedrich August, Administrator of the Prince-Bishopric of Lübeck. Oldenburg would join the German Empire in 1871.

The Oldenburg succession dispute commemorated by this Taler was one of many succession conflicts in Schleswig-Holstein which in the 19th century included two brief wars between Denmark and Prussia. This is beyond the scope of this article. Lord Palmerston, the long-serving British foreign secretary and later prime minister, is reported to have said: "Only three people have ever really understood the Schleswig-Holstein business—the Prince Consort, who is dead—a German professor, who has gone mad—and I, who have forgotten all about it." .

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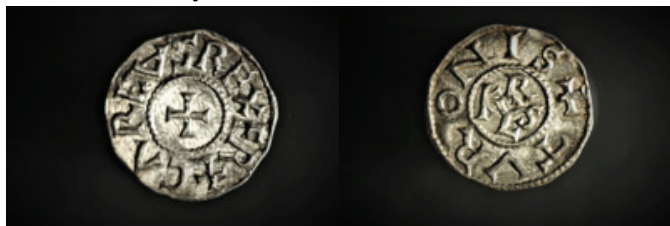
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## The Silver Denier of Charlemagne

Michael T. Shutterly NI#2703



In 751 the Mayor of the Palace, Pepin the Short, dispatched the last of the Merovingian “Do-Nothing Kings” of Francia to a monastery. The Frankish nobles then elected Pepin as *Rex Francorum* (“King of the Franks”). Pepin was the son of Charles Martel, from whose name (“Carolus” in Latin) the Carolingian Dynasty took its name.

In late 793 or early 794 Pepin’s son Charlemagne remodeled the Frankish coinage system. The obverse of his *novi denarius* (“new denier”) displays a central cross surrounded by some form of the inscription +CARLVS REX FR (“Charles King of the Franks”). The reverse displays the Karolus (“Charles”) monogram of the Carolingians surrounded by an inscription naming the mint. The reverse inscription on this coin reads +TVRONIS, for the mint in Tours. Tours was the site of Charles Martel’s great victory in 732 against the Muslim invaders from al-Andalus, which prevented the Muslim conquest of France.

The new deniers were also heavier than previous Frankish deniers, based upon a new system of weights and measures that Charlemagne had implemented in 789. His new deniers weighed 32 wheat grains (equivalent to 1.7 grams today) under the new weight system, while the previous deniers had weighed 20 barleycorns (equivalent to 1.3 grams today) under the earlier system of weights.

For accounting purposes, Charlemagne designated the *sou* (which did not yet exist as a coin) as equal to 12 *deniers*, and the *libro* (“pound” – another non-existent coin) as equal to 20 *sous* or 240 *deniers*. Charlemagne’s coinage ratio of 1 *libro* = 20 *sous* = 240 *deniers* formed the basis for the English system of 1 *pound* = 20 *shillings* = 240 *pence*. And in England, as in Francia, two of the three “coins” in the ratio – the English “pound” and “shilling” – were only moneys of account which would not be minted as coins for centuries.

Charlemagne’s coinage innovation went beyond changes in design, weight and accounting methodology. Until this time, the hundreds of different Frankish mints struck their coins more or less independently, with each moneyer (or the local lord in whose domain the mint was located) determining the design of the coins that were minted. Pepin the Short had attempted to bring some consistency in the coinage, but it was Charlemagne who was able to achieve true uniformity in the design of the coins that circulated throughout the Frankish realm.

# NON-CIRCULATING ECUADORIAN COINAGE MINTED BY RALPH HEATON & SONS IN 1884.

By Charles Helfand

In 1884 the firm of Ralph Heaton & Sons (often referred to as the Birmingham Mint, England) was awarded a contract for silver coinage by the Republic of Ecuador. The following denominations were minted: ½ Decimo, 1 Decimo, 2 Decimos, Half Sucre and 1 Sucre. They all shared a common design which was used by Heaton from 1884 until 1915.

Prior to the actual production of the 1884 circulation coinage, the Heaton Mint produced a veritable plethora of Model, Trial, Essai, Essay, Pattern, Specimen, Die Splash and Die Trial coins with the date 1884. These terms are sometimes used rather loosely so it can be rather confusing at times. Instead they are all non circulating official mint issues.

The current edition of the *Standard Catalog of Ecuadorian Coins* lists over forty different non circulating issues produced by the Birmingham Mint dated 1884. The list is too long to reproduce in this short article but there are two exceptional groups which merit special attention due to the fact that they are virtually unknown and quite probably unique. All are unlisted in KM, Seppa (1973), Carrion, LeTort, Sweeny and Hoyos.

## THE FIRST OUTSTANDING GROUP

The Uniface copper models or die trials dated 1884 below were offered in the Ponterio & Associates, Auction Sale #141, January 12 -13 , 2007. They were all produced by the Heaton Mint. They are extremely rare and presumably unique. Michael Anderson cites two public offerings of these coins on page 190 of "*A Numismatic History of Ecuador*". This group first appeared in 1954 as lot #2061 in the Sotheby & Co. public auction "*The Palace Collection of Egypt*", (King Farouk's collection). They later reappeared as lot #571 in Baldwin's, M&M, Italo Vecchi Ltd. Auction I "The New York Sale" in December of 1998. To our knowledge these are the only two public offerings of these two groups. The above paragraph (slightly modified), the truncated descriptions and the excellent photos shown below were taken from the Ponterio sale indicated above and are used with permission from Mr. Richard Ponterio of Stacks Bowers Galleries.

1. 1 Decimo (1884) uniface reverse trial strike in copper, 19.40 mm; 3.51 grams.
2. 2 Decimos (1884) uniface reverse trial strike in copper, 24.20 mm; 5.89 grams.
3. 2 Decimos, 1884 uniface obverse trial strike in copper, 24.00 mm; 6.58 grams.
4. 1/2 Sucre (1884) uniface reverse trial strike in copper, 31.20 mm; 13.54 grams.
5. 1/2 Sucre, 1884 uniface obverse trial strike in copper, 30.20 mm; 12.91 grams.
6. 1 Sucre (1884) uniface reverse trial strike in copper, 37.10 mm; 22.40 grams.
7. 1 Sucre, 1884 uniface obverse trial strike in copper, 36.80 mm; 25.57 grams.

The 1/2 and 1 Sucre are struck on specially made planchets manufactured with a lathe, however the 1 and 2 Decimos are struck on planchets punched from a sheet of metal. The coins all bear a plain edge and some show minute traces of lacquer which was applied while the coins were part of the King Farouk of Egypt collection.



Lot 638 Decimo Uniface reverse trial strike or model, ND (1884). Toned Proof. Photos courtesy of Stacksbowers.com. Price Realized: \$776.25



Lot 639 2 Decimos Uniface obverse & reverse trial strikes or models. Toned Proof. Photos courtesy of Stacksbowers.com. Price Realized: \$2,024



Lot 640 1/2 Sucre Uniface obverse & reverse trial strikes or models, 1884.

Toned Proof. Photos courtesy of Stacksbowers.com. Price Realized: \$4,025



Lot 641 Sucre Uniface obverse & reverse trial strikes or models, 1884.  
Toned Proof. Photos courtesy of Stacksbowers.com. Price Realized: \$5,060

## THE SECOND OUTSTANDING GROUP

The second outstanding set was sold by VL-Nummus at their auction held in June of 2017 and they have kindly given permission to use their photos of these outstanding rarities. The set includes eight pieces, consisting of obverses and reverses of 1 Decimo, 2 Decimos, 1/2 Sucre and 1 Sucre. All the coins are struck on planchets punched from a crude sheet of silver. The set is almost certainly unique.



(1 Decimo) 1884 Birmingham. ECP440 Uniface obverse trial strike, approx 19 mm. 1.7 grams. Photos courtesy of vl-nummus.com.



1 Decimo (1884) Birmingham. ECP441 Uniface reverse trial strike, approx 31 mm, 3.4 grams. Photos courtesy of vl-nummus.com.



(2 Decimos) 1884 Birmingham. ECP461 Uniface obverse trial strike, approx 23 1/2 mm, 2.1 grams. Photos courtesy of vl-nummus.com.



2 Decimos (1884) Birmingham. ECP462 Uniface reverse trial strike, approx 24 mm, 2.1 grams. Photos courtesy of vl-nummus.com.



(1/2 Sucre) 1884 Birmingham. ECP492 Uniface obverse trial strike, approx 32 mm, 8.5 grams. Photos courtesy of vl-nummus.com.



1/2 Sucre (1884) Birmingham. ECP493 Uniface reverse trial strike, approx 31 mm, 4.5 grams. Photos courtesy of vl-nummus.com.





(1 Sucre) 1884 Birmingham. ECP506 Uniface obverse trial strike, approx 36 1/2 mm, 7.1 grams. Photos courtesy of vl-nummus.com.



1 Sucre (1884) Birmingham. ECP507 Uniface reverse trial strike, approx 45 1/2 mm, 21.5 grams. Photos courtesy of vl-nummus.com.

In conclusion, anyone with verification of a 1 Decimo 1884 obverse trial strike in copper would be appreciated as this should logically exist but none are recorded. Please forward information to researcher: [Chuck95@verizon.net](mailto:Chuck95@verizon.net)

(Editor's note - Chuck also has available a PDF document entitled: "Ecuadorian Coins - Significant Sale Prices" available. A free copy is available from him by requesting it from him at the above email address.)

## Counterfeiting Began Even Before Money Was Invented, Archaeologists Deduce

Ruth Schuster

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*Fig 1. Authentic Babylonian Shekel c. 1200 BC. (Editor's Collection)*

Around 3,200 years ago, the great civilizations around the Mediterranean collapsed. The sprawling empire of ancient Egypt shrank back to the land by the Nile, and even suffered the indignity of invasion from overseas. The Hittite cities in Anatolia were burned to the ground. Ugarit (in today's Syria) was brought low, the Mycenaeans and Minoans vanished into the long night, the Babylonians descended into chaos and the Sea Peoples apparently became ascendant, sailing out of the Aegean.

And in the turmoil that descended over Canaan as the Egyptian forces retreated, a new industry arose in the land: counterfeiting, a team of archaeologists from the University of Haifa and the Hebrew University report in the *Journal of Archaeological Science*.

This was during the late Bronze Age period, and the peoples of the Levant were in the process of mastering advanced metallurgy. They had come a long way from the early furnaces dating to over 6,500 years ago, which were recently discovered in Be'er Sheva. The Bible itself indirectly indicates how far the industry had progressed from its prehistoric start in hammering copper out of ore and crude smelting in clay crucibles: "As they gather silver and brass and iron and lead and tin into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you in mine anger and in my fury, and I will cast you in, and melt you" – Ezekiel 22:20.

But coins hadn't been invented yet – that only happened about 2,500 years ago, it seems. So what exactly were the ancients of collapsing Canaan counterfeiting? Fragments of metal used as currency in the period predating coins. You would use it to buy, say, some goats and trick the vendor into thinking it was pure lovely silver. Alas, it was not; it was debased. Hoards predating the Bronze Age collapse were almost pure silver; hoards after the period of the collapse were silver again; hoards dating to the period of the implosion were alloyed



These silver fragments used in commerce were not uniform in shape or size, so the amount of actual silver they contained mattered, explain doctoral candidate Tzila Eshel of the University of Haifa with Prof. Ayelet Gilboa of the Zinman Institute of Archaeology at the University of Haifa, and Prof. Yigal Erel of the Institute of Earth Sciences and Naama Yahalom-Mack of the Biblical Archaeology Department at the Hebrew University.

Note the greenish tinge attesting to a high proportion of copper in the alloy.

Who was behind this nefarious scheme, at least at first? Possibly, the imploding Egyptian regime.

### **Retreat to the Nile**

"Cut pieces of silver were used as a means of payment in the 1,500 years before coins were invented," Eshel explained to Haaretz, adding that insofar as is known, coins were invented in Lydia in roughly the seventh century B.C.E. Such tender only reached what is today's Israel in the Persian period.

She adds that the silver didn't have to be cut fresh from an ingot, as it were (all international metal trade at the time was in the form of ingots, many of which have been retrieved from ancient shipwrecks). "If someone had a silver ring that broke, they could use it for its silver value," Eshel says.

Some call the source silver ingots chocolate bar ingots because of proto-perforation that enabled their subsequent dismemberment into the silver pieces for trade.

There is pretty much no silver in Israel, Egypt or anywhere near there. The closest sources were Anatolia, Turkey, and Greece, Eshel says. They studied silver pieces from eight sites in Israel, including Megiddo (aka Armageddon), Beit She'an and Ashkelon, from relevant layers dated to 1200 to 950 B.C.E. – the time of the region-wide upheaval. Long story short, the alloy "silver" pieces are so mixed that isotope analysis is not particularly helpful, the team explains. A separate analysis suggesting the silver ore may even have come from Spain cannot be verified, they add.

The copper, however, came from the so-called King Solomon's Mines in Timna. Likely the silver-bit-makers of yore had to resort to using what pieces of silver they could find lying around from earlier, better periods. That in and of itself would have muddled the chemical signal of the metal.

Wherever it came from, as chaos descended roughly 3,200 years ago, a shortage of silver was created in the Levant, especially in Egypt. Unable to import more, the perp – possibly the Egyptian leaders before they left Canaan once and for all – began doctoring the metal during production. And "silver" pieces used for trade came to consist largely of copper, a sliver of silver – and other constituents that would emulate the look of silver, chiefly arsenic.

That's why the archaeologists suspect the ancients of counterfeiting as opposed to some more mundane aspiration: there was a deliberate effort to try to make the things look like silver.

To be clear, silver pieces before the great collapse had been made of almost pure silver, the archaeologists explain. So were silver pieces afterward. But in the interim period, when the entire region had descended into chaos, they were not. In some cases, the "silver" pieces contained as much as 80 percent copper.

The archaeologists feel the creation of the copper "silver" pieces being systematic, not sporadic, supports the theory of fakery, at

least at first (otherwise they could have left the things looking coppery).

As the practice persisted over 250 years, no less, we can assume the secret came out. But by then it was a sort of new normal, they explain.

Asked about use of gold pieces rather than silver, Eshel explains that “there were periods in which gold was also used, especially in Egypt. They had a lot of gold, imported from Africa, preferring it to silver. When they controlled Israel in the late Bronze Age, they apparently used gold too – but usually silver was more widely used,” she says.

Just like today, gold was usually more precious than silver (based on ancient Assyrian and other texts). But in Egypt itself, silver was worth more than gold because it was relatively rarer, she says.

Anyway, not all sins inevitably come to light, but this one did. Israel is littered with archaeological finds, including several dozen hoards of precious metals. In fact, the research began with excavators reporting the discovery of hoards of bronze bits – they corroded green, as copper does. But when cleaning the artifacts in the lab, suddenly a silver-like look appeared, Eshel recounts. All the treasures to which this applied were from the same period: the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age – yes, that period when the great civilizations collapsed.

“It continued for 250 years, starting in the late Bronze Age when the Egyptians were ruled Canaan,” Eshel sums up. “This counterfeiting begins shortly before they left – which is why we believe the Egyptians initiated it. We find it in the contexts of Egypt in Canaan, such as the site of the Egyptian garrison in Beit She’an.” And it’s still happening to this very day.

### Numismatics International's Coin Spotlight:



#### **Korea - Tae Dong, Two Chon, Silver with Blue Enamel - 1882**

With the forced opening of Korea (aka the "Hermit Kingdom") to Western merchants and religious evangelists, Korean officials attempted to modernize the traditional Chinese cash type coinage in use for a thousand years. The Tae Dong (Great Eastern Kingdom) Treasury Department, under the leadership of King Gojong, designed these unique cast silver coins to which they added a spot of colored enamel powder which necessitated a separate oven treatment to melt and solidify the 'cloisonne' enamel. Therefore, these coins are some the first 'colorized' coins ever to be manufactured. They were issued in three denominations and colors. All denominations can be found in all three colors, making the assembly of a complete set a real challenge due to their scarcity. A short set could consist of the three denominations in three different colors, or perhaps, the three denominations in a single color. The three denominations are 1, 2, and 3 Chon and the enamel colors are black, blue, and green, with their scarcities also following that order. These unique coins were manufactured for only a few months in 1882 - 1883.

Silver prices were rising quickly during this period and the cost of manufacture was prohibitive. This resulted in these coins being hoarded by the ruling classes. They were also shipped overseas, mainly to Japan. The uncoloredized obverse is read from the top, bottom, right, then left, just as in most Chinese cash coins. In this specimen we see Tae (Dae) Dong (t,b), which means "Great East," and two (=) Chon (r,l). The reverse features the blue enameled center over the character "Ho," standing for Hojo (Treasury Department). Quite often the enamel on these coins is partially or wholly missing. Often the enamel is so opaque, due to thickness or color, that the "Ho" character is obscured. They can also be found with traces of color outside the circle and some show no signs of ever having had the enamel applied. I've also heard of examples that indicate a repair of the damaged or missing enamel. This example (KM#1082) weighs 6.8 grams and has a diameter of 27.5 mm. This one was encapsulated by PCGS as MS 61, which is a fairly high grade for these types.

## BOOK REVIEW

Jovel, Roberto, *Las Monedas que Circularon en El Salvador Durante la Época Colonial Española, Siglos XVI a XIX*, Imprenta y Offset Ricaldone, San Salvador, El Salvador, 2018; vi, 506, (2) pp.; ISBN 978-99961-0-987-4.

Print run: 200 copies, perfect bound, letter-size on glossy paper, with pictorial card covers.

### Review:

This work by Roberto Jovel, in Spanish, whose title translates as “The Coins that Circulated in El Salvador During the Spanish Colonial Period, XVI<sup>th</sup> to XIX<sup>th</sup> Centuries”, is just the latest in his significant line-up of important contributions to the numismatic literature of Central America. Featuring meticulous research, an extensive bibliography, and a prologue by Manuel Chacón Hidalgo, the highly respected curator of numismatics of the Museums of the Central Bank of Costa Rica, the book is divided into four principal sections covering (as the title implies) the coinage that circulated in El Salvador during each of the four centuries covered: the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>, before independence from Spain in 1821.

In his introduction to the work, Mr. Jovel explains that much has been written about El Salvador's coinage from the moment of independence to the present, but that little was known about the coinage in circulation before that time. This work fills that dearth of knowledge. Each section is subdivided into chapters that delve more deeply into the particular circulating coinage of the era covered. Richly illustrated (albeit only in black and white), the section on the 16<sup>th</sup> Century begins with a chapter on the general historical background and context of the age, followed by the discovery and conquest of El Salvador. The six native tribes that inhabited the area and their means of exchange are described, from cacao to cotton cloth, gold and the T-shaped pieces of copper that served as money.

After the conquistadors in the expedition from Mexico and Guatemala led by Pedro de Alvarado establish control over the area and found the Villa of San Salvador, the coinage of the Spanish Catholic Monarchs (Ferdinand and Isabella) enters circulation. This is soon followed by that of Charles and Johanna. As town after town in El Salvador are founded, the rich details surrounding these events weave a fascinating tapestry of history, the whole cemented together by its coinage. The huge impact of the establishment of the mint at Mexico City, and the commencement of the circulation of its coinage throughout Central America is another fascinating period.

Each chapter continues the historical progression through the centuries, richly illustrated with drawings, hundreds of photographs of the coinage of the times, and all punctuated by quotations from the historical documentation that point to the meticulous research that Mr. Jovel undertook in the creation of this work. Everything is covered, from the scandals in Potosí and their impact on the coinage in El Salvador, to the countermarking of coinage in the Captancy General of Guatemala in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century

and the proclamation ceremonies and coinage of each Spanish king. After nearly 500 pages we arrive at last at the independence of Central America, and the work ends, leaving us wanting more, but with a far greater understanding of the life and times and coinage of the centuries preceding this event.

For those interested in the numismatics of El Salvador and this period in history, *Las Monedas que Circularon en El Salvador Durante la Época Colonial Española, Siglos XVI a XIX* is unhesitatingly recommended by this reviewer. Interested parties may contact Mr. Roberto Jovel, the author, at [rjovel@jovel.org](mailto:rjovel@jovel.org) and obtain price and shipping details directly from him.

*Alan Luedeking, NI#2282 July 2019*

## Prologue

### Salvadoran Provisional Coins

#### Definition of Types and Variates

#### (book review)

We tend to take monetary regimes of one kind or another for granted as individuals, governments, or societies. Most systems end up being relatively stable over prolonged periods of time, at least from the standpoint of being sufficiently predictable within tolerable limits by the commercial communities which they serve. Of course, there are notable exceptions. Venezuela in the last few years, Zimbabwe over the last couple of decades, Bolivia in the 1980s, the Weimar Republic post World War I, Guatemala and Nicaragua in the first couple of decades of the twentieth century all come to mind. So too the Confederacy of the Civil War in the United States, mid-nineteenth century. The allied Southern states essentially generated no coinage, instead issuing an array of Confederate notes backed only by their perceived ability to continue growing and exporting cotton to neutral European markets. One must marvel at how societies survive such disruptions to everyday life. Just how do governments manage to rule under circumstances which they sometimes cause themselves whether it be their participation in prolonged and costly wars, political instability, currency manipulation, poor planning, outright corruption or some combination thereof. What ever the response, these phenomena are generally ephemeral, leading to recovery after being overcome by events or thru financial interventions.

The numismatic and notaphilist communities have addressed these monetary anomalies in varying degrees. A few evolve as niche interests to a coterie of enthusiastic collectors supported by focused newsletters and/or reference books, generally descriptive in nature or offering a catalogue of known issues. Other provisional regimes pass virtually unnoticed, disappearing into the dustbin of history. Not so with El Salvador thanks to the efforts of Roberto Jovel and Brad Yonaka. *Salvadoran Provisional Coins* is a masterpiece of research and insight into the political and economic catalysts which generated four, short-lived series of provisional coins in less than a decade. The period in question was the late 1820s and early 1830s of a turbulent Central American Federation which, oddly enough, scarcely fired a shot to achieve its independence from Spain just a few years before.

The famous Chilean author, J. T. Medina was one of the first numismatists to address emergency or provisional coinage in Latin America in his classic 1919 book, *Monedas Obsidionales Hispana-Americana*. That effort included some of the emergency issues of El Salvador. But as important as Medina's work may have been, the reference was essentially a compendium of emergency issues produced by a cross section of Hispanic entities during the independence and early post-colonial periods. Medina's work was essentially descriptive in nature, incorporating the few documented issues recorded to that date. *The Coins and Paper Money of El Salvador*, 1973, written Alcedo Almanzar and myself, added to the list of variations found in the provisional coins legends and provided some background regarding their authorization, but it pales in comparison to Jovel and Yonaka's efforts. *Salvadoran Provisional Coins* is more on a par with Mercedes Carlota de Prado's classic 1973 publication, *Monedas Venezuelanas*, in terms of thoroughness and documentation, when it comes to providing an accounting of a monetary regime's origin, execution, and ultimate passing.

This is no easy task for any monetary system, much less one that is provisional in nature, created during an era of political conflict and/or economic instability. Because such regimes are meant to be temporary; discussions, decisions and implementation creating them often are not recorded or well archived. But Jovel and Yonaka searched the official records to find and share relevant documentation, revealing the rationale for authorizing provisional coins along with the relevant political and socioeconomic backdrop justifying their creation. The authors searched far and wide, collecting quality photographs of the better examples auctioned over the years to more clearly demonstrate the many die or design varieties. In doing so, they generated a systematic catalogue and numerical reference system for the first time to reference this series.

The publishers thoughtfully displayed their images at double their actual size to more clearly display the many variations, an important feature since Salvador's provisional coinage was crudely struck using dies of varying quality. Thus, even as issued, they often lacked full details. Some photos are revealed for the first time, such as the quarter real of the 1828 Prado series, of which only three specimens are known. Many depict examples of provisional coins previously undocumented or for which there is only one reported specimen. Where special features appear, the authors incorporate magnified photo vignettes depicting scarce or unique characteristics, all carefully described and catalogued.

For me, one of the more fascinating features of *Salvadoran Provisional Coins* is the section addressing the demonetization of

the four provisional series issued from 1828 to 1835. Despite the political infighting that took place in Central America during this period, El Salvador still was a member of the Central American Federation. After the period of conflict subsided, the Federation and authorities of the Government of El Salvador agreed to demonetize the provisional issues. Jovel and Yonaka fully document this unusual process, providing an accounting as the weight, fineness, and value of those coins collected, melted and ultimately re-coined. I can think of few other instances whereby the withdrawal of a provisional regime has been so closely documented. It says a lot about Salvador's provisional series. Although many coins were debased, the coins had intrinsic value, amounting to more than 45,000 pesos, a considerable amount money in that era. This is in sharp contrast to the Honduran provisional issues of roughly the same period (1832-1861) which devolved to being nearly pure copper. One day, perhaps, someone will replicate for Honduras what Jovel and Yonaka accomplished for Salvadoran provisional issues.

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